

Matawan Historical Sites Commission
Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 7pm
Matawan Municipal Community Center Conference Room

Call to Order: 7:07pm

Roll Call

Members present:	Barry Orr, Lorraine Arnold, Gail Chester, Janilee Yanny
Council liaison present:	Councilmember Steven Russell
Members absent:	Kurtis Roinestad
Recording Secretary:	Amy Denholtz Lewandowski
Public Members:	Jason Peist, Daisy Orr

Approval of Meeting Minutes

May 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve May 9th Meeting Minutes

Main Motion: Chester 2nd: Yanny

Ayes: All present Nays: none Abstain: none Absent: Roinestad

Chairman's Report

Mr. Orr read the report emailed to members by Chairman Roinestad on June 19th:

- Freneau Monument repair has been completed.
- Carriage House at Burrowes Mansion has been repaired and repainted.
- Burrowes Mansion shutter repaired and placed back on second floor window.
- Entry gates at Burrowes Mansion repaired and placed back on.

Matawan Historic Sites: Property Reports

Burrowes Mansion

Vice Chair Orr noted that funding was approved for the electrical upgrade but waiting for the bid specs. Waiting for an update on the exterminator.

Mt. Pleasant cemetery

Vice Chair doesn't have an update on the encroachment on the cemetery. Unable to confirm if the boundary markers are set yet.

Research consideration for 250th Revolutionary Anniversary

Ms. Arnold suggested performing research to find out exactly where church was located, and having this research in advance of the 250th for the interpretive sign.

Vice Chair Orr suggested designating someone to do the research for the interpretive sign, whether the commission or the Historical Society.

Ms. Chester asked about the site-based research, and whether the ground penetrating radar (GPR) could find the church foundation.

Mr. Peist suggested the site plan could help find true north, and the survey would help.

Mr. Orr stated there is some confusion because graves point in different directions. It would be nice for the interpretive sign to show where graves of major figures are, as well as where church was located.

Ms. Chester wondered if Pat Noble, archivist for Matawan Historical Society, or Mark Chidichimo would be interested in delving into it.

Mr. Russell asked about working in tandem with the society. Mr. Orr will reach out to Mr. Noble.

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) involvement in marking graves

Vice Chair Orr reiterated that the markers still need to be permanently placed, and there remains the question of the identity of Samuel Forman. It should be discussed with the original researcher about how this conclusion was reached, since the Colonel and merchant may be different Samuel Formans, and resolve this before setting it in concrete. The typo on the stone should also be corrected.

Freneau Grave

Vice Chair Orr noted the repair was completed, but unsure if it was cleaned yet.

St. James Zion Church

No report.

Downtown Preservation District

No report.

Old Business

Vacant Position

Vice Chair Orr noted that the Historical Society was going to recommend Jason Peist, and Cathy Zavorskas was going to submit a letter.

Mr. Russell was unsure if the letter was submitted.

85 Main Street

Ms. Yanny attended the most recent Planning/Zoning Board meeting. She noted the problems with garage, putting concrete over the grass, and drainage from the meeting before, which were not resolved since the applicant didn't come in with a revised set of plans.

Stanley Fisher House

Vice Chair Orr noted that the Stanley Fisher house was approved at the Planning/Zoning Board meeting. He reiterated that it isn't the original house, but built on its footprint.

Ms. Yanny mentioned that Mr. Roinestad asked for pavers, and the developer agreed to using pavers for the Stanley Fisher house. She also noted that the developer plans to cut down the trees and build another house there; her understanding is it would be a one-family with a garage and one pad out front.

Discussion ensued about Borough ordinance and the 30% asphalt allowance.

Ms. Yanny noted that it's in line with both sides of the block and looks the best now. Ms. Yanny also added that one neighbor complained and requested lower taxes but the voting member said she bought the property while the house next to her was abandoned.

Vice Chair Orr noted it's questionable if the house will be included on future shark tours.

Revised Ordinance

Mr. Russell provided it to the Borough Administrator, who gave it to the Redevelopment Attorney to review. He will follow up for a status update.

Telephone Call with Millburn

Vice Chair Orr noted the telephone call with the Millburn Historic Preservation Commission was very helpful.

Ms. Chester added that their commission had an expert historic architect who consults for number of municipalities, and could be helpful to this commission.

Vice Chair Orr paraphrased that the Millburn commission was unphased by some of the people rebelling and disliking restrictions.

Mr. Russell noted that Millburn emphasized the importance of education and meetings.

Vice Chair Orr reiterated their suggestion was to not designate the whole historic district upfront, but start small and incrementally add individual properties.

Ms. Arnold remarked on their suggestion to pass the ordinance first and define properties after.

Mr. Peist proposed starting with blocks and lots, removing demolished and updating from there; starting by highlighting tax maps and populating the district from there.

Vice Chair Orr suggested if meeting with attorney, there should be a discussion of the certified local government status that could be attained and what grants would be available.

Ms. Arnold emphasized if the ordinance qualifies for grants it would be extremely valuable and beneficial to the town.

Ms. Yanny asked if Mr. Russell would mention the grant opportunities, in order to move this along.

Mr. Peist asked if there would need to be some sort of marker or timeframe selected, like the 1930s or 60s. Mr. Orr responded that the ordinance would start with what they had.

Ms. Arnold noted there are different qualifications, and that it has to be more than just age.

Vice Chair was pleased with the call and appreciated the contact information and valuable resources Millburn provided.

New Business

Preservation Education

Mr. Russell noted the commission needs to think about what methods want to use.

Mr. Peist recommended putting historic signs back up and documenting some of the houses.

Ms. Chester noted that the walking tour put up those signs. Mr. Orr added that the signs are stored in the Carriage House.

Mr. Peist asked about having a historic booth at Matawan Day and putting the signs up on Main Street then.

Mr. Russell stated that the commission can have its own booth at Matawan Day.

Vice Chair Orr added that it could be a shared booth with the historic society and both can have materials there.

Mr. Peist noted that the website doesn't have enough content. The Library has database of old photographs; perhaps the commission can piggyback off it and add information about Native Americans.

Vice Chair Orr mentioned that for 250th, Chairman Roinestad requested updated Matawan history.

Ms. Orr noted the deadline was July 1st and Pat Noble already submitted the write-up for Aberdeen.

Mr. Peist added that the history should highlight African American, Native American, and church history. The church may want to submit history.

Vice Chair Orr noted Pat and Mark are working on that, including Black Civil War soldiers from Matawan.

Mr. Peist asked about information related to integration with schools.

Ms. Orr noted the Historical Society is connected to the school and there was a planned walking tour and visit to the mansion for 100 children in the Strathmore 3rd grade. The school couldn't get substitute nurse for the class trip. There would have been a rotation with the four classes: shark attack and significance of the creek, mansion, and other two classes on the walking tour. Rescheduled/planned for fall 2024.

Separately, Ms. Chester met with Claire Garland about a class on August 1st at Brookdale @1pm and invited Ms. Chester to participate. Ms. Garland took pictures and made a slideshow, including pictures of Mill Road before it was paved and the unpaved spot through [Ms. Chester's] lot.

Public Comment


The Recording Secretary asked if the Governing Body approved the resolution for the per-meeting pay increase. Mr. Russell responded that this was approved at a recent meeting in June.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 11, 2024 at 7pm. Mr. Russell will be away.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Arnold 2nd: Chester Ayes: all present Nays: none
Adjourned: 8:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Amy Denholtz Lewandowski, RMC
Recording Secretary